DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 339 681 SP 033 342

AUTHOR Bauer, Norman J.
TITLE Professional Development Schools. Initiating a Conversation.
PUB DATE 26 Apr 91
NOTE 21p.; Paper presented at the Spring Conference of the Confederated Organizations for Teacher Education (Syracuse, NY, April 25-26, 1991).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS College School Cooperation; *Educational Change; *Educational Principles; Elementary Secondary Education; Higher Education; Preservice Teacher Education; *School Role; Teacher Education Curriculum; Theory Practice Relationship
IDENTIFIERS Holmes Group; *Professional Development Schools

ABSTRACT

This paper attempts to provide: (1) a clear mental image of the concept of a professional development school (PDS); (2) a clear understanding of a number of standards to be considered as guides during the decision-making process which goes on as a PDS is designed and implemented; and (3) insights gained from dialogues with faculty members of a Rochester, New York, secondary school who had been exposed to the concept of a PDS and were considering the possibility of establishing a PDS. The image of the PDS which is articulated is based on the fundamental assumption that improvement of teaching and student learning cannot continue to be driven from outside; "top-down" decision making has not been effective. In order to develop a PDS organizational structure, certain standards should be employed for local decision making: students must learn how to go about learning; high quality education must be available to students from diverse backgrounds; school faculty and teacher educators are expected to go on learning, developing, and renewing themselves; and in the PDS, continual reassessment, relearning, and redesign go on. (IAH)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED339681

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SCHOOLS:

INITIATING A CONVERSATION

by

Norman J. Bauer, Ed.D.

Professor of Education

State University of New York

Geneseo, N.Y.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Norman J. Bauer

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

SPRING CONFERENCE

CONFEDERATED ORGANIZATIONS FOR TEACHER EDUCATION

SYRACUSE, NEW YORK

APRIL 25-26, 1991

SP033 342

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SCHOOLS: INITIATING A CONVERSATION

Norman J. Bauer, Ed.D.
Professor of Education
SUNY-Geneseo, NY 14454

April 26, 1991

"We believe that universities, schools of education, and public schools all over the country need to start conversations about long-term directions and prospectives for cumulative change and collaborative work - among institutions that have for too long run separate courses." Tomorrow's Schools [1]

Introduction

In its first publication, **Tomorrow's Teachers (TT)** [2], published in 1986, **The Holmes Group (HG)** established five goals for itself: (l) to make the education of teachers intellectually more solid; (2) to recognize differences in teachers' knowledge, skill, and commitment, in their education, certification, and work; (3) to create standards of entry to the profession - examinations and educational requirements - that are professionally relevant and intellectually defensible; (4) to connect [their} own institutions to schools; and (5) to make schools better places

for teachers to work, and to learn.[3]

The establishment of these goals by the HG, and the continued pursuit of their interest in improving the quality of teacher preparation and the quality of teaching and learning in America's schools, has met with an array of reactions ranging from the most supportive and positive to the most antagonistic. Some view the need to engage in serious thinking about the problems of teacher education and the improvement of our schools as worthy of the most vigorous and sustained attention. Old structures, old ways of thinking about these processes have undergone vigorous reexamination by those who have been associated with the HG. The results of this reconstructive process have caused controversy because they have apparently run up against those who would continue to pursue current practices, to retain the status quo. To its credit, however, the HG has continued its efforts to work toward both improved teacher education and teaching and learning in our schools.

This is revealed by the second major publication of the HG, produced in 1990, entitled **TOMORROW'S SCHOOLS (TS)**[4] This publication represents the product of six two-day seminars involving teachers, professors, school principals, and superintendents from across the nation who travelled to East Lansing during 1988 for the purpose of engaging in a

dialogue about the purposes for schooling, about how children can best achieve these purposes, about how teachers can teach with these purposes in mind as we move inexorably toward the twenty-first century.

Emerging from these discussions came the belief that a complex set of reforms need to be brought together: liberal education which provides prospective school personnel with an understanding of the disciplines; reconstructed and coherent educational studies; and clinical studies expertly supervised in exemplary settings. Where these reforms ought to come together, the HG argues, is in the **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SCHOOL (PDS)** - in effect, a new institution.

A PDS would create a new set of relationships, ***a unique partnership,*** between liberal arts faculty, faculty in colleges and schools of education, teachers in elementary and secondary schools, and agencies and institutions in the larger society.

Objectives

The objectives of this presentation emerge from this concept of a PDS and the unique ways in which university professional and liberal arts faculty, teachers in the schools, print and electronic media, and social, judicial, economic, and familial institutions within the larger society would relate and work together toward the continued improvement in

learning by **ALL** our children and youth. The ambience of such a PDS would reveal what the HG claims would become an intense learning community, one in which teachers would find an environment in which they could renew and sustain their professional development while engaging in the sorts of systematic inquiry which could add substantially to our base of professional knowledge.

With this stress on building an integrated partnership for the improvement of teacher preparation in mind I will gear my presentation toward three specific objectives which, if achieved, should enable those present to acquire (a) a clear mental image of the concept of a PDS; (b) a clear understanding of a number of standards which should be considered as guides during the decision-making process which goes on as a Professional Development School is designed and implemented; and (c) initial insights which this writer has gained from dialogue with the faculty of a secondary school who have been exposed to the concept of a PDS and who will further pursue the possibility of establishing a PDS further. These insights will reveal the concerns faculty raise, and indicate the care with which the concept of a PDS needs to be explained, if such a school is to become a true, reciprocal partner with the faculty of a school of education, with the faculty in the liberal arts component of a college or

university curriculum, with those institutions and agencies in the larger society which have a powerful and lasting impact on the intellectual, emotional, valuational and physical growth of children and youth.

Image of a PDS

To acquire an accurate picture of a PDS one must first grasp the fundamental assumption (inferred) which permeates TS. It is then necessary to be familiar with a particular theory of schooling.

Assumption

This assumption is that during the past four decades almost every effort to improve the preparation of our teachers and administrators and the quality of instructional effectiveness in our schools has been dictated by persons from outside the schools. These people have been associated with the U.S. Office of Education, with the various state education departments, with national and state executive and legislative offices, with business and industry, with private foundations, with universities and colleges who have carried out research which is presumed to have great power in terms of improving schools and teachers, with university faculty who have remained aloof and distant from the actual context in which teaching takes place, with commissions and panels of persons,

many, if not all, of whom were not employed in, or sensitive to the problems and practices of teacher education and school teaching. We are now hearing from the President of our country about his goal of establishing unique schools in each of the legislative districts across the country, along with his continued emphasis on *choice* of schooling, stressing the competition between schools which he believes would induce improvement in all schools.

Panaceas of this sort were and are often proffered by well-intentioned individuals and groups, suggestions usually accompanied with the claim, as Mr. Bush and his new education officer, Lamar Alexander are now urging us to consider, that they would mitigate our educational problems if only they were thoroughly endorsed and competently implemented.

During these decades well-intentioned, intelligent and dedicated teachers across the country have made, and will continue to make, valiant efforts to translate many of these ideas into practice. In more than a few cases, too, exemplary practices did ensue, islands of excellence emerged, transformations of practices did reveal the fact that teacher preparation and teaching and learning in our schools could, indeed, be improved.

Nonetheless, the HG claims, most of these positive results were

and are limited to just a few locations; few if any have had a lasting impact on the nature of either the certification of teachers or the quality of student learning acquired in classrooms.

The HG assumes that the main reason for this has been the fact that in almost every one of these change efforts there was a continued reliance on 'top-down' decision-making. The real worlds of particular schools and of particular teachers, this assumption argues, have simply not been considered to be important when decisions have been made about changing the preparation of school personnel and improving the quality of teaching in our schools. Indeed, school personnel have most frequently been perceived as functionaries, in the schools to carry out the suggestions, often times the mandates, of others, becoming as a result increasingly deskilled in terms both of their desire and their confidence to shape and improve their teaching skills and the effects of these skills on learners.

Theory of Schooling

Let met briefly explain the theory of schooling which permeates TS, and which constitutes the basis of thinking behind PDS. My purpose here is to enable you to gain a clear mental picture of this theory, its primary purpose, its essential components. Additional, in-depth

explanatory material may be obtained elsewhere. [5]

As developed in TS, PDS are grounded in a progressive theory of schooling, one which has a naturalistic, pragmatic view of the world, a constructivist view of epistemology, an expressive, emergent view of moral, aesthetic and political structure. In many ways this theory is clearly aligned with the thinking of Dewey and more recently Donald A. Schon.

Such a theory claims that we live in a democratic society, one which requires that we encourage the shaping of environments in which all persons have an opportunity to participate and shape their ends. This is quite a radical idea, particularly when one considers its ramifications for teacher education and classroom teaching. What it means as far as a PDS is that all organizations and individuals concerned with the preparation of teachers and the teaching and learning of students in elementary and secondary school classrooms would be actively involved in planning and implementing a PDS. Teacher education, according the TS, "represents a mesh in a very wide net that stretches from the universties to the schools and out to the wider society. Pull on one part of the net, and you end up tugging on all the other parts too." [6]

More specifically, this means that the faculty of a college, school

or department of education, liberal arts faculty, prospective classroom teachers and/or administrators, classroom teachers in the PDS, career classroom teaching professionals in schools other than a PDS, school administrators, parents and non-parents, representatives of social agencies and institutions, and classroom students in the PDS would be included as a part of a PDS. Indeed, this broad involvement of different individuals and groups would encompass many other professionals as well, including "school counselors, psychologists, nurses, social workers, and their counterparts among university faculty." [7]

Inviting such groups to link themselves together, to create an integrated community for the purposes of improving the quality of teacher preparation and the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom would surely create both a rich, complex and challenging school culture, one which would require, the HG argues, the "acceptance of uncertainty and the personal. The school should be an area of uncertainty. The goal is to learn to live with uncertainty, to live with it productively. And always there is a relationship with people." [8]

Dewey argued much the same thing with his stress on the unsettled, the indeterminate situation. "The unsettled or indeterminate situation," he claimed, "might have been called a 'problematic' situation.

This name would have been, however, proleptic and anticipatory. The indeterminate situation becomes problematic in the very process of being subject to inquiry. The indeterminate situation comes into existence from existential causes, just as does, say, the organic imbalance of hunger. ... The first result of evocation of inquiry is that the situation is taken, adjudged, to be problematic. To see that a situation requires inquiry is the initial step in inquiry." [9]

Stressing the importance of relevant, situationally specific inquiry, such a new organizational structure needs to be "keyed to the coordination of instruction and services... stress flexible staffing arrangments that emerge from the needs of the local school ... prepare to shift from the present forms of accountability to new forms of professional responsibility ... balance individual work with collaborative work ... [and created a genuine, reciprocal] partnership with the university."[10]

Standards

In order to develop an organizational structure like a PDS certain standards, the HG argues, should be employed as guides for local decision-making. The first of these, not unfamiliar to many of us, is the stress placed on getting students to practice those habits of mind which will

compel them to go on learning thoughout their lifetimes. Students, in other words, must learn how to go about learning. In order to do this well, the HG emphasizes, teachers need to teach much more toward understanding.

"Conversation, experience, interpretation, criticism, engagement, voice, participation, purpose," would be some of the languages which the HG links with such understanding. [11] Each of these languages would find its use in the stress placed by the HG on the development of schools and classrooms which "are thoughtfully organized to become communities of learning in which all students participate actively."[12] One learns to live in a democracy, to think reflectively and critically, to acquire the skills of foregrounding, goal setting, suspending judgment, contextual analysis, and moral courage by living together in a community, in a public space, "where people master the discourse and habits that are essential to the development of both the private and the public person." [13] Such living will reveal uncertainties which emerge from the world of experience in which students find themelves, and which subsequently are translated into problematics. Teachers in such communities, then, will need to be careful observers of their students, "follow them closely, find out what excites

them, and then help them to do that." [14] They need to take "what students already know and think as a point of departure for new learning," [15] enabling them to "construct and reconstruct knowledge as they go along."[16]

A further standard which would be stressed in a PDS would be that which creates school and classroom communities which enable people who live in very unequal home and neighborhood circumstances to acquire increasingly high quality education. Much stress would be placed upon the acquisition of insight into the diverse "linguistic and racial and social -class and cultural differences" [17] which teachers regularly face in classroom teaching. Prospective teachers particularly "need experience where talk about racial, ethnic, and social-class diversity is a central item in faculty discussions." [18] Pursuing a social reconstructionist view, not unlike that of Theodore Brameld and, more recently, Henry Giroux, the HG suggests that many of the PDS "will be purposely sited in poor areas, will engage in social and political action to acquire additional resources and to press the claims for justice on the larger society." [19]

A PDS will be designed not only for classroom students, however. In addition its purpose is to serve as a school for adult learning, a school

in which prospective teachers, full-time professional teachers, teacher educators and administrators are expected to go on learning, developing and renewing themselves. In this regard "a primary aim of PDS will be to contribute to intellectually solid programs of teacher education that intertwine the wisdom of theory and practice; that encourage shared conceptions among university and school faculty; that assist novices in evaluating, integrating, and using knowledge from multiple sources; that convey the moral basis of teaching; and that recruit and keep imaginative and interesting teachers in the profession." [20]

A final standard for guiding the design of a PDS is to perceive such an institution as a place in which continual reassessment, relearning, and redsign goes on. The environment of such schools would reflect a deep, sustained commitment to the view that the "improvement and professionalization of teaching ultimately depend on providing teachers with opportunities to contribute to the development of knowledge in their profession ... [to] the continuing development of systematic knowledge and reflective practice." [21]

Insights from an initial conversation

Recently the writer initiated conversation with persons associated

with a secondary school in Rochester, New York; a school with which he has had frequent contact since the fall of 1985. One of the characteristics of this school which make it appropriate as a possible site for a PDS is its size; about 140 students are enrolled. TS points out that a "learning community could be more easily enacted in a smaller school... Too many swollen institutions are processing students rather than educating them. Genuine learning communities require places where people know each other and are known." [22]

The conversation began with the distribution of a brief 2-page summary of the concept of a PDS which was prepared and submitted by this writer to the faculty, some students and parents in this school. It should be clear that the handout was designed in initiate a conversation about the purpose and structure of a PDS in a sincere reciprocal sense, not with the thought either of proposing something specific to the faculty or with the thought of determining what it is that ought to be done. The fact that the summary terminated with 'next steps' suggested that we would have to engage in discourse and decide together what, if any, further action ought to be pursued. While this may appear to be too open-ended, too uncertain, for some, particularly those who are dominated by hegemonizing intellectual structures which take-for-granted a top-down

orientation toward public schools, it is of utmost importance from the view of the HG, that a PDS "should be an opportunity to join the strengths of the two institutions in pursuit of common purposes, and to combine their intellectual and material resources to more powerfully pursue those purposes." [23]

Participants in this conversation included a classroom student, a student teacher, about twelve faculty, a parent and the program administrator of the school. None of those engaging in this discourse possessed any prior knowledge of the concept of a PDS. A spirited conversation regarding the purposes of the proposal ensued.

Early in this conversation stress was placed on the two major criticisms which the HG claims, largely correctly, have been leveled against the university or college preparing teachers or administrators. One of these is that "faculty who teach teachers are too far removed from the realities of schooling to provide knowledge that is usable; and that research on teaching and learning is too seldom based on actual contexts of teaching." [24]

Among the additional significant concerns expressed during this initial encounter were the lack of time classroom teachers currently have to participate in the development of a PDS, the lack of money and other

resources which would be necessary to acheive the purposes which would be likely to emerge from the creation of a PDS, the lack of a clear understanding of the functions which a PDS would entail, and a recognition of the challenge related to the development of such an institution posed by three prior existing sets of constraints, those of the state, of the local school district, of the union.

Nonetheless, a substantial measure of enthusiasm for pursuing the idea further was revealed during our discourse. Consequently a decision was made to continue our conversation and to have he program administator of the school procure several copies each of both TT and TS for use by the students, faculty and parents.

A PDS, as outlined above is designed to cope with these criticisms by including the professional practice of teacher educators in the PDS and by stressing the classroom realities of teaching when pursuing educational research.

Summary

An attempt has been made in this paper to develop in broad outline the structure,function and standards which could be employed in the design and development of a PDS as proposed by the HG. In addition, brief

mention was made of the results of a conversation which was initiated with persons associated with a secondary school in Rochester. Some of the concerns raised by the participants during this initial period of discourse about PDS were identified. These concerns seem to confirm what the HG suggests about its attempt to invent a new institution, the PDS. Clearly it is engaged in an effort "to develop something that's never been done in an organized way, ... [and] it will be hard and take a long time." [25]

Reading Notes

1. Tomorrow's schools: Principles for the design of professional development schools. (1990). East Lansing, MI: The Holmes Group, Inc. ix.

2. Tomorrow's teachers: A report of the Holmes group. (1986). East Lansing: MI: The Holmes Group, Inc.

3. Ibid., 4.

4. Tomorrow's schools, Op. cit.

5. For additional in-depth analysis of each of these models the reader is referred to: Bauer, Norman J. (1989). "Phsical models of schooling, the 'OUGHT' question and educational change." ERIC ED 311 582.

6. Tomorrow's schools, Op. cit. vii.

7. Ibid., 50.

8. Ibid., 3,

9. Dewey, John. (1938). Logic-The theory of inquiry. New York: Henry Hold and Company. 107.

10. Tomorrow's schools, Op. cit. 72-81.

11. Ibid., 12,

12, Ibid., 20.

13. Ibid., 26.

14. Ibid., 14.

15. Ibid., 18.

16. Ibid., 13.

17. Ibid., 30.

18. Ibid., 36.

19. Ibid., 33.

20. Ibid., 48.

21. Ibid., 57.

22. Ibid., 71.

23. Ibid., 51.

24. Ibid., 50.

25. Ibid., 21.